

tian writings : it first takes full shape in the somewhat later Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. In the simplest and perhaps the earliest of these definite accounts we are merely told the story of the death and resurrection, the latter fact being vouched for on the dubious testimony of "a young man clothed in a long white garment," supplemented (apparently at a later period) by subsequent "appearances" to various believers. With the controversies which have raged about these different stories, however, the broad anthropological enquiry into the evolution of God has no concern. It is enough for us here to admit, what the evidence probably warrants us in concluding, that a real historical man of the name of Jesus did once exist in Lower Syria, and that his disciples at a period very shortly after his execution believed him to have actually risen from the dead, and in due time to have ascended into heaven.

At a very early date, too, it was further asserted that Jesus was in some unnatural or supernatural sense "the son of God"—that is to say, once more, the son of Jahweh, the local and national deity of the Jewish people. In other words, his worship was affiliated upon the earlier historical worship of the people in whose midst he lived, and from whom his first disciples were exclusively gathered. It was not, as we shall more fully see hereafter, a revolutionary or purely destructive system. It based itself upon the common conceptions of the Semitic community. The handful of Jews and Galileans who accepted Jesus as a divine figure did not think it necessary, in adopting him as a god, to get rid of their own preconceived religious opinions. They believed rather in his prior existence, as a part of Jahweh, and in his incarnation in a human body for the purpose of redemption. And when his cult spread around into neighboring countries (chiefly, it would seem, through the instrumentality of one Paul of Tarsus, who had never seen him, or had beheld him only in what is vaguely called "a vision") the